



CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Proposal Name: Hourglass Soil Rehabilitation

Proposal Date: 1/30/2020

Proponent Name: Mary Young

Line Officer: Bill Gamble

District: La Grande Ranger District

County(ies): Union County

Anticipated Implementation: Summer 2020

Signing Authority: District Ranger

PALS Tracking #: 57853

Project File: C:\Users\briannakarollo\Box\01.
brianna.carollo
Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Hourglass Soil
Rehab

GIS Info:

T:\FS\NFS\WallowaWhitman\Project\lagSandBox201
2\GIS\Data\SoilsRehab_2019\SoilsRehab_data.gdb

General Location: 77 road

Applicable Management Areas: MA3
(Wildlife/Timber Winter Range), MA1 (Timber
Production), Bald Angel TMA

Legal Description: Willamette Township of Union
County in T5S R41E Sections 35 and 36, T5S R42E
Sections 32 and 33, and T6S R42 E Sections 4, 5 and
6

Elevation Range: 4400 - 5600 feet

Watersheds: Big Creek and Upper Catherine Creek

APPLICABLE CATEGORY/IES

This proposal is categorically excluded from documentation in an EA or EIS because it fits the following category, pending extraordinary circumstance determinations:

Applicable Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(20) (DM Required) Activities that restore, rehabilitate, or stabilize lands occupied by roads and trails, excluding National Forest System roads and National Forest System trails to a more natural condition that may include removing, replacing, or modifying drainage structures and ditches, reestablishing vegetation, reshaping natural contours and slopes, reestablishing drainage-ways, or other activities that would restore site productivity and reduce environmental impacts.

This category is applicable for this project because the proposal would restore unauthorized routes to protect natural resources from motor vehicle damage.

PROPOSAL

The La Grande District plans to reduce impacts to multiple natural resources from unauthorized motorized traffic by restoring approximately 22 non-system roads. Prolonged motorized use of non-system roads degrades soils, fish and wildlife habitat, cultural resources, native vegetation, water quality, and quiet recreation opportunities. Restoration of these non-system routes will help protect valuable resources from direct motorized disturbances as well as reduce associated risks like exposure to invasive plants, illegal dumping, and potential for human-caused fires.

These user-created tracks originate on Forest Service Road 77. We plan to disguise road entrances by tree felling, decompacting hardened surfaces, and/or installing berms or boulders (see project map for locations). Tree felling would occur where there is dense vegetation within 200-400 feet from the 77 road. Decompacting would be limited to areas with hardened surfaces near the 77 road. Berms would be constructed with nearby soil to block



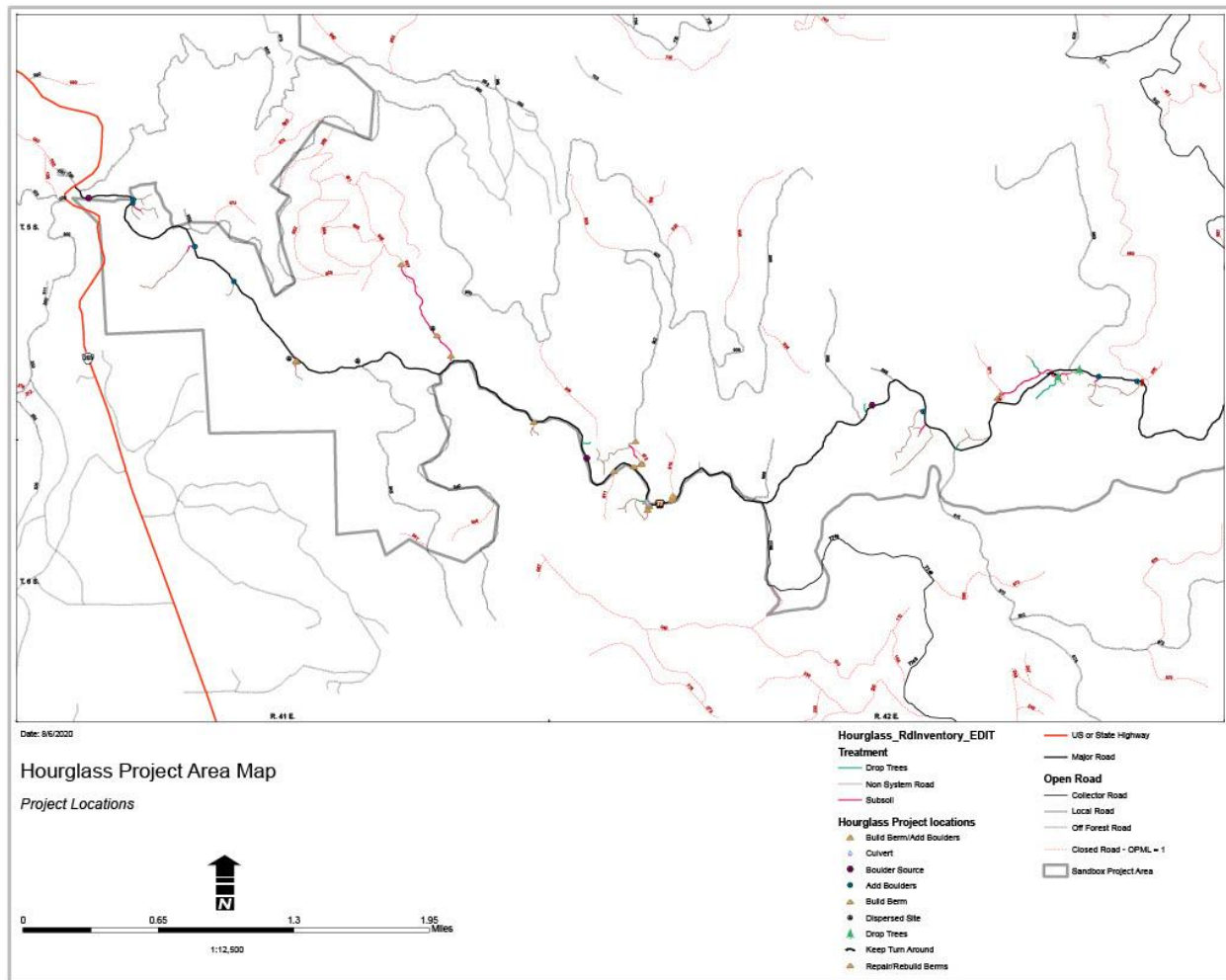
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motorized access. These closures would be strategically located to take advantage of natural landforms and vegetation and minimize the extent of ground disturbance. Activities would occur when ground conditions and access to the site minimize soil disturbance.

The proposal is consistent with the Forest-wide Standards and Guidelines for Soils, Wildlife, and Transportation which include:

- Give maintenance of soil productivity and stability priority over uses described or implied in all other management direction, standards, or guidelines (LRMP 4-21).
- Maintenance of adequate numbers and distribution of standing dead trees for snag dependent wildlife species (LRMP 4-38).
- Snag Management. Maintain at least the 40 percent level (the management requirement level) of snags 10 to 20 inches in diameter wherever higher levels are not specified and where doing so would not conflict with the primary management area objective (LRMP 4-45).
- All-Terrain and Off-Road Vehicles. Permit all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use and over-the-snow vehicle use on blocked or closed roads unless this use is found to be incompatible with resource management objectives. These types of uses are generally felt to be an acceptable form of recreation except where site specific analysis shows them to be incompatible due to resource management problems. This determination will be made through the Forest Travel Management Plan (LRMP 4-36).
 - **Bald Angel Closure Area:** In order to provide for big game security a motorized closure area was established in the Bald Angel project area. The closure area boundary is defined by the Forest Service boundary to the west and south, the 77 Road along the North, and the 77, 67, 70, 7035 and 7035076 Roads along the east. All boundary roads are open for motorized travel.
 - All motorized travel would be restricted to signed open roads within the project area. Motorized use would be permitted within 300 feet of open road to provide for dispersed camping opportunities, however, no cross-country travel would be permitted. This closure would remain in effect until the District motorized access planning process which reflects the National Strategy is complete and a new plan in place.

MAP(S)



PROPOSAL SCREENING

REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

Given the nature of the proposal, the Responsible Official is requesting documentation to demonstrate compliance with the following regulatory considerations in addition to NEPA:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NFMA/Land Management Plan | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tribal Consultation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Endangered Species Act | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clean Water Act |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sensitive Species (FSM 2670) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pertinent Executive Orders |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> National Historic Preservation Act | |

AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS & PERSONS TO BE CONTACTED



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Given the nature of the proposal, the Line Officer/Responsible Official is requesting the following agencies, organizations and/or persons be contacted to provide input to, or to be made aware of, the proposal. A brief overview of feedback or comments provided is included.

SHPO, CTUIR consulted under R2013061606003 Sandbox Vegetation Management Project

ODFW, Union County Commissioners Office

08/04/2020: Field tour with ODFW and Union County Commissioners

SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 1: Applicable Project File Documentation for Agencies, Organizations & Persons Contacted

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
Invitation to Partners (Email) Sandbox Consultation	C:\Users\briannacarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Hourglass Soil Rehab C:\Users\briannacarollo\Box\lagSandBox2012~NEPA- Restricted\Consultation

RESOURCE PARTICIPATION IN ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS REVIEW

The Line Officer/Responsible Official has requested the following resource areas to review the proposal to determine compliance with the regulatory considerations.

Table 2: Documentation of Review Completion

Resource	Review Complete
Botany	7/29/2020 Sabrina Smits
Cultural/Heritage	8/11/2020 Erik Harvey
Fisheries	8/5/2020 Sarah Brandy
Soils	8/10/2020 Mary Young
Wildlife	8/10/2020 Laura Navarrete

ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS REVIEW

NATIONAL FOREST MANAGEMENT ACT (NFMA) – LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSISTENCY

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations regarding proposal consistency with applicable Land Management Plan direction, standards and guidelines.

Botany: Consistent

Lands/Special Uses: N/A

Cultural/Heritage: Consistent

Minerals: N/A

Engineering: N/A

Range: N/A

Fisheries: Consistent

Recreation: N/A

Fuels: N/A

Scenic Resources: N/A

Hydro: Consistent

Soils: Consistent



Silviculture: N/A

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Wildlife: Consistent

Special Management Areas: N/A

ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

THREATENED, ENDANGERED, PROPOSED AND CANDIDATE SPECIES &/OR CRITICAL HABITAT

The pertinent specialists reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations for threatened, endangered and/or proposed species:

Table 3: TEPC Effect Determinations for ESA

Species/Habitat	Status	Proposed or Designated Critical Habitat Present?	Determination*	Brief Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
Columbia River Bull trout Critical Habitat	Threatened	No	NE	There is no Designated Critical Habitat for CR bull trout in the project area
<i>Mirabilis macfarlanei</i> , <i>Silene spauldingii</i> , and <i>Pinus albicaulis</i> :	Proposed Threatened	No	NE	No potential habitat in the project area

*NE – No Effect; NLAA – May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect; LAA – May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect; No Jeopardy - Not Likely to Jeopardize the Continued Existence or Adversely Modify Critical Habitat

SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 4: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support ESA Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
Biological Evaluation for Sensitive Plants	C:\Users\briannacarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Hourglass Soil Rehab

SENSITIVE SPECIES (FSM 2670)

The pertinent specialists reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations for sensitive species:

Table 5: Sensitive Species Impact Determinations

Species	Determination*	Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
Aquatic Sensitive Species	NI	There are no sensitive species or habitat in the project area.
Botany Sensitive Species	NI	There are no sensitive species or habitat in the project area.
Gray wolf Fir pinwheel, Shiny tightcoil	NI	Lack of effects resulting from management activities Lack of tree removal or disturbance of down woody debris
Fringed myotis, Lewis' woodpecker,	BI	Potential for reducing current and future snag loss



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Species	Determination*	Rationale (or refer to other project documentation)
Whiteheaded woodpecker		

NI – No Impact; **MIH**- May Impact Individuals or Habitat, but Will Not Likely Contribute To A Trend Towards Federal Listing Or Loss Of Viability To The Population Or Species; **WIFV** - Will Impact Individuals or Habitat with A Consequence That the Action May Contribute To A Trend Towards Federal Listing Or Cause A Loss Of Viability To The Population Or Species; **BI** – Beneficial Impact

SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 6: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support Agency Sensitive Species Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
Biological Evaluation for Sensitive Plants and Wildlife	C:\Users\briannakcarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Hourglass Soil Rehab

NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT (NHPA) – SECTION 106 REVIEW

The pertinent specialist has reviewed the proposal and made the following determination regarding Section 106 compliance:

Other - See explanation of other determination in comments section.

COMMENTS

The Wallowa Whitman National Forest archaeologist has determined that the Sandbox Vegetation Management Project is considered an “undertaking” pursuant to the definition provided in Section 301(7) of the National Historic Preservation Act. This undertaking has a **Historic Properties Avoided Determination** with site protection recommendations

SUPPORTING PROJECT DOCUMENTATION

Table 7: Applicable Project File Documentation to Support NHPA Compliance

Documentation Type	File Name (if applicable/needed)
Email verification tiering Hourglass to Sandbox analysis	C:\Users\briannakcarollo\Box\01. brianna.carollo Workspace\lag2020SmallProjects\Hourglass Soil Rehab

TRIBAL CONSULTATION

Based on the nature of the proposal, the line officer/responsible official made the following determination regarding Tribal Consultation:

Consultation with American Indian Tribes is ongoing.

COMMENTS

Consultation with CTUIR was initiated during the Sandbox planning process and is ongoing.



PERTINENT EXECUTIVE ORDERS

The line officer and/or applicable specialist(s) have determined the proposal is in compliance with the following Executive Orders (EO), which were deemed pertinent based on the nature of the proposal.

- EO 11988, Floodplain Management
- EO 11990, Protection of Wetlands
- EO 12898, Environmental Justice
- EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites
- EO 13112, Invasive Species
- EO 13175, Consultation & Coordination w/ Indian Tribal Governments
- EO 13186, Migratory Birds
- EO 13443, Facilitation of Hunting Heritage & Wildlife Conservation

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA) – EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Pertinent specialists have reviewed the proposal and made the following determinations with regards to presence of extraordinary circumstances:

Table 8: Extraordinary Circumstance Determinations

Resources Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstances	Is there a degree of potential effect that raises uncertainty over its significance? Briefly explain.
WILDLIFE Federally listed threatened or endangered species, Designated critical habitat, Forest Service sensitive species	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No:
FISHERIES Federally listed threatened or endangered species, Designated critical habitat, Forest Service sensitive species	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: There are no threatened, endangered species, critical habitat, or sensitive species in the project area
BOTANY Federally listed threatened or endangered species, Designated critical habitat, Forest Service sensitive species	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: There are no threatened, endangered species, critical habitat, or sensitive species in the project area.
Floodplains, wetlands or municipal watersheds	N/A, not present
Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas	N/A, not present



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Resources Conditions Considered for Extraordinary Circumstances	Is there a degree of potential effect that raises uncertainty over its significance? Briefly explain.
Inventoried roadless areas	N/A, not present
Research natural areas	N/A, not present
American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: Known sites will be avoided and if any new sites are located they will be flagged and work will discontinue until evaluated by an heritage specialist
Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas	NO, there is no uncertainty Rationale for Yes/No: Known sites will be avoided and if any new sites are located they will be flagged and work will discontinue until evaluated by an heritage specialist

DECISION MEMO

Hourglass Soil Restoration

U.S. Forest Service

La Grande Ranger District, Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Union County, Oregon

This decision incorporates all previous information in this document and included in the project file.

DECISION & RATIONALE

I have decided to authorize the activities described above in the [Proposal](#) section, to include any modifications identified during environmental analysis and review of regulatory compliance. The continued creation and use of non-system roads is negatively impacting resources and compromising wildlife security and other objectives identified in prior analyses associated with the Bald Angel and Sandbox projects. Activities proposed will address unsustainable proliferation of user created routes, help facilitate soil and vegetation recovery, reduce potential for accelerated erosion and increase wildlife security and habitat by helping to limit motorized disturbance and loss of quality snags important for a variety of species. Lastly, consideration to public access needs has been incorporated through the travel analysis process completed as part of the Bald Angel and Sandbox projects as well as retention of access to quality dispersed recreation sites identified during analysis for this proposal.

APPLICABLE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION & FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS

The [Proposal Information](#) section above provides rationale for categorically excluding this action from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and for using the identified 36 CFR 220.6 (e)(20). The [Environmental Analysis Review](#) section documents the finding that no extraordinary circumstances exist, along with findings required by other applicable laws and regulations, demonstrating compliance with the regulatory framework for the activities authorized by this decision.

AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS & PERSONS CONTACTED

A [list of agencies, organizations and/or persons contacted](#) regarding this proposal is provided above, along with a brief overview of comments/feedback received and how they were considered.



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IMPLEMENTATION DATE

I intend to implement this decision August 2020.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Decisions that are categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) are not subject to an administrative review process (Agriculture Act of 2014 [Pub. L. No. 113-79], Subtitle A, Sec. 8006).

CONTACT

For additional information concerning this decision, contact:

Mary Young, Forest Soil Scientist, 3502 Hwy 30, La Grande, OR, 97850, 541-962-8501

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Bill Gamble'.

8/13/2020

Bill Gamble
District Ranger



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